



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

January 16, 2018
REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
William A. White Jr.	Chair	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	Vice Chair	Present	
Ben Ewen-Campen	Ward Three Alderman	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One Alderman	Absent	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	

Others present: Alderman Mark Niedergang, Alderman Will Mbah, Tom Galligani - OSPCD, Michael Glavin - OSPCD, Chief David Fallon - SPD, Ed Bean - Finance, Rob King - Capital Projects, Michael Bertonni - Treasury, Emily Hedeman - OSPCD, Oliver Sellers-Garcia - OSE, Alan Inacio - OSPCD, John Deluca - Water Department, Tim Snyder - Mayor's Office, Charles Sillari - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:01 PM by Chairman White and adjourned at 7:56 PM.

Approval of the November 28, 2017 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the December 5, 2017 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the December 11, 2017 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the December 13, 2017 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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199247: That the Director of SPCD provide this Board with written responses to certain requests for residential and commercial data since 2010.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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199297: That the Administration implement a PILOT program to promote partnerships with major local non-profit institutions for fair-value voluntary PILOTs.

Alderman Ballantyne inquired about the reality of dealing with non-profits and spoke about larger non-profits and a methodology on moving forward. Mr. Beane said most of the non-profits are small and don't have the resources to make PILOT contributions. Chairman White requested a written response.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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199305: That the Director of SPCD provide this Board with a comprehensive financial plan to develop Union Square, including expenditures to date and future costs, by early September.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200064: That the Director of SPCD consult with the new management team at North Point and report back to this Board on their plans.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200065: That the City Engineer provide this Board with the storm water policy and a discussion of the 4 to 1 plan.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200066: That the City Treasurer provide this Board with Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund balance sheets and a report of water and sewer rates in the 15 largest MA communities.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200592: That the Director of Personnel report to this Board June's employee vacancies and all hires since then.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200593: That this Board discuss the two reports received from the Fire and Police Departments of tax exempt facilities and services rendered over a two year span.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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200752: That the Administration provide assistance, including financial where appropriate, to resident homeowners whose property is damaged from the roots of trees planted by the City.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200982: That the Superintendent of the Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds appear before the Finance Committee to discuss the policy of charging homeowners who request that their meter be checked when water bills are questioned.

Mr. DeLuca explained the cost associated with property visits, which are performed by a city hired private company. He said that new meters are slower and don't charge for as much water and he explained what a dye pack is and how it is used to find leaks in a toilet.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201664: That the Administration provide a 3 year projection of bond requests, by project name, as of June 2016.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201745: Requesting the appropriation of \$200,000 from the Capital Projects Stabilization Fund for the Citywide Mobility Plan.

RESULT:	WITHDRAWN
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201856: That the City Solicitor advise this Board on regulating Air BnB rentals through a possible local tax.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201868: That the Director of Water and Sewer appear before this Board at its September 13 regular meeting to discuss the new base water charge, the reasons for its adoption, and why the Board was not informed of it during the budget meetings.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201896: That the Director of Personnel provide an updated report of any and all positions filled and/or vacated since the FY17 budget discussions.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202008: That the Director of Finance and the Superintendent of Water and Sewer provide this Board with the total costs associated with emergency water and sewer repairs for

FY14, FY15 and FY16 by this Board's September 13 regular meeting.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202026: That the Water Superintendent report to this Board on the imposition or suspension of water and sewer base charges for customers.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202153: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$94,000 in a bond for additional design services for the West Branch Library Renovation Project.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202157: That the Water Superintendent provide this Board with a report of the number of commercial customers that are being charged the residential rate, prior to this Board's next meeting on October 13, 2016.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202158: That the Water Superintendent inform this Board about the State Law regarding 4 to 1 infiltration in-flow for water and sewer charges for large developments, and that the water and sewer fees for Assembly Row, Maxwell Green, and other large scale developments be provided as well.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202164: That the Director of Finance review with this Board a residential and commercial real estate tax bill, clearly identifying all additional fees that taxpayers are paying (e.g. CPA charge).

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202165: That the Director of Finance discuss review with this Board a water/sewer bill for all rate payers (tiered), clearly identifying all additional fees that rate payers are paying (e.g. base monthly charge).

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202282: Requesting approval of an appropriation of \$47,500 from the Capital Stabilization Fund to retain an economic planning/real estate consultant to assist in developing a District Improvement Financing application.

RESULT:	WITHDRAWN
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202500: That the Administration report to this Board on outreach efforts to seniors who

are home owners, to help them take advantage of property tax exemptions and deferral opportunities.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202618: That the Administration update this Board on the proposed Community Advisory Committee for Capital Improvement Projects and explain how it will interact with this Board.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202884: Requesting approval to appropriate \$360,000 from the Capital Stabilization Fund for the Assembly Square Master Plan.

RESULT:	WITHDRAWN
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202785: That the Director of Traffic and Parking consider purchasing 70 temporary speed bumps to be deployed beginning in April, or as soon as possible, on residential streets that have requested traffic calming measures.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202786: That the Director of Traffic and Parking consider purchasing 21 flashing speed monitoring sign boards to deploy on streets where residents are concerned about speeding.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202875: That the Water and Sewer Superintendent report to this Board whether homeowners could install a separate water meter for outdoor water lines, which would not incur sewer fees.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202902: That the Chief Assessor inform this Board about whether a review is conducted each fiscal year to verify that residential exemptions are accurate, whether an audit is conducted before an exemption is granted, and whether there is data about the percentage of properties where residency cannot be verified.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202927: That the Director of SPCD report to this Board on the Administration's intention to budget in FY18 for workforce development and job training programs.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202971: Green Cab requesting a waiver of Taxi Medallion fees.

Alderman Rossetti said Uber is hurting the taxi industry and the taxi company is a community partner.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203250: That the Chief Assessor and SPCD Counsel appear before this Board to explain the transaction between Federal Realty Investment Trust and Partners Health Care for Partners' building at Assembly Square, and advise whether there are any legal avenues for the City to collect property tax payments from Federal Realty for that parcel.

Mr. Glavin said there is a neighborhood services agreement and Partners Healthcare pays taxes on part of the building.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203288: That the Director of Finance provide this Board with the total amount of meals tax received in each of the last five fiscal years and, to the extent possible, those receipts broken out by business district.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203394: That the Administration explore reducing residential street cleaning from four days a month to two.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203395: That the Administration consider a veterans' exemption on fees related to the Community Preservation Act.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203448: That the City Assessor and Finance Director provide revenue comparisons for real estate and other taxes received, for a hotel vs. a commercial building of comparable size.

Alderman Ballantyne inquired about the types of taxes a hotel could generate.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203513: Opposing the Keystone XL Pipeline, and restricting engagement with the financial institutions supporting the pipeline.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203571: Requesting the acceptance of a gift of \$10,000 from Wynn for the Memorial on the Mystic Fireworks celebration on May 29, 2017.

Alderman Rossetti asked about a fireworks purchasing strategy and Mr. Beane said the funds could be used for overtime, not necessarily the purchase of fireworks.

RESULT:	WITHDRAWN
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203572: Requesting the acceptance of a gift of \$5,000 from Federal Realty Investment Trust for the Memorial on the Mystic Fireworks celebration on May 29, 2017.

RESULT:	WITHDRAWN
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203587: That the Director of Purchasing provide a written review for this Board on the implementation of the Living Wage Ordinance, including the current hourly rate and its use in city agreements.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203733: That this Board deems it necessary to include in the FY18 budget an appropriation of \$18,000 from the General Fund to the Dilboy Field Enterprise Fund to provide the use of Dilboy Field to Somerville non-profit youth football and soccer organizations without charge, and so requests that the Mayor make that appropriation.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203740: That the Grant Manager report to this Board by October 15, 2017 on progress in supporting SomerPromise.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203741: That the Director of Personnel implement bi-weekly payroll for all employees.

Mr. Beane said this is a big undertaking and that it is a collective bargaining item.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203742: That the Fleet Manager provide a 2017 mid-year report of all services provided by the Fleet Management Department, and the expenses to date in each of its line items.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203888: Requesting approval to appropriate \$360,000 from the Capital Stabilization Fund for the Assembly Square Master Plan.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203923: That the Chief Assessor inform this Board about state laws regarding housing trustees and residential tax exemptions.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204280: Requesting approval to create the 0 Elmwood Stabilization Fund Account and accept a payment to the Fund of \$25,000 from 27 Eaton Street LLC for streetscape improvements.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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204328: Requesting to brief this Board on the Union Square District Improvement Financing strategy.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204497: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$2,000,000 in a bond to repair and improve the Buena Vista Garage.

Mr. King explained there is a 99-year lease to the adjacent property owner for parking spaces and that the city is required to maintain the structure to provide safe storage of the vehicles in the spaces being rented. Mr. Glavin said the lease will reset and hopefully increase, which will allow the bond to be paid. Alderman Rossetti asked if the approval of lease negotiations will come before the BOA in 2020 and she requested that the law department provide an opinion as to how the BOA can be involved. Chairman White stated that the BOA will not be involved in the lease terms because it is a 99-year lease.

The \$2,000,000 will be used for electric, plumbing, and construction work. Mr. King reported that the garage generates approximately \$219,000 per year for the city. He will provide the committee with information regarding the number of underground parking spots and occupancy rates.

Alderman Rossetti's motion that the City Solicitor provide an opinion as to the Board of Aldermen's participation in the Buena Vista garage lease re-negotiation in 2020, was approved.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204491: That the Administration consider increasing permit fees to cover the cost of a new position to oversee street reconstruction and utility work.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204558: Requesting approval to create the 290 Highland Ave Stabilization Fund, and accept a payment to the Fund of \$10,000 from 290 Highland Ave LLC for Ward 5 Improvements.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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204518: Requesting a transfer of \$32,500 from the Salary Contingency Account to the

Health & Human Services Personal Services Salaries Account to fund an Environmental Health Liaison.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204625: That the Director of Finance provide this Board with quarterly reports for all stabilization funds.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204626: That representatives from US2 appear before the Finance Committee to explain what they're committing to build in Union Square, when it will be built, and what it will be worth.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204755: Requesting the transfer of a City-owned parcel (82-D-1) in the North Prospect Block to the Redevelopment Authority.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204640: Requesting the appropriation of \$200,000 from the Capital Stabilization Fund to implement the Winter Hill Neighborhood Plan.

Mr. Galligani discussed the project and said that that it's time to make the plan a reality, adding that he wants to bring back a Main Street environment to Winter Hill. The consultant work has been \$115, 000 and the balance of the funds will be used to engage the community such as a Main Streets organization, to hire interns and for social media outreach. Mr. Galligani was unsure if this was in the FY-18 budget or the Capital Improvement Plan, but Mr. Beane said it is in the budget and is an unscheduled project in the Capital Plan. Alderman Ewen-Campen asked what the process is with respect to the budget and Alderman Niedergang asked how the Star Market lawsuit will impact the plan. Chairman White said it would not be an impediment.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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204758: Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$7,747.68 using available funds in the Sewer Department.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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204759: Requesting acceptance of a \$30,000 grant with no new match required, from the MA Department of Environmental Protection to the Office of Sustainability & Environment for school recycling equipment and implementation assistance.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia discussed the reason for the grant and Alderman Rossetti asked if there was union negotiation necessary. Mr. Sellers-Garcia said this was done in association with the School Department and he will specifically get information about the union aspect.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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204756: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$1,500,000 in a bond for Sewer Rehabilitation and Replacement, as part of the Capital Improvement Program.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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204757: Requesting approval of a transfer of \$9,500 in Planning and Zoning, from the Professional Services Account to the Personal Services Salaries Account, for a temporary hire due to a medical leave.

Mr. Inacio said the return of the employee is unknown, therefore an intern is needed.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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204760: Requesting acceptance of an \$8,700 grant with no new match required, from Somerville Cambridge Elder Services to the Council on Aging, for transportation.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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204762: Requesting the acceptance of a 27-foot Boston Whaler and corresponding trailer, given to the Police Department by the Boston Police Department, with no match required.

Alderman Rossetti referenced a conversation with the Fire Chief regarding a fire boat at Assembly Row. Chief Fallon said that this boat, that will be docked at the Shore Drive boathouse, is a joint asset that will be staffed with fire personnel. He explained that there is a directive to increase maritime security and said that in addition to its use for public safety, it will also be used as a tool to teach youths about boating. The boat will also be used to assist surrounding communities, when needed. Maintenance will be handled by the city and the boat will carry no armament. Chief Fallon will get back to the committee with that insurance information for the boat.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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204761: Requesting acceptance of a \$7,816 grant with no new match required, from Somerville Cambridge Elder Services to the Council on Aging, for health and wellness programs.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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201268: Abutters to the West Branch Library submitting comments regarding its renovation.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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201539: Purchasing Director responding to #201490 re: current Verizon contracts.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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202080: Acting Water Superintendent submitting a Water & Sewer Enterprise Funds Financial Analysis and a Water & Sewer Rate Study.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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202156: Acting Director of Personnel responding to #201896 re: status of City vacancies.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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202135: Acting Water Superintendent responding to #202008 re: emergency water and sewer repairs in FY14-FY16.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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202224: Assistant City Solicitor responding to #201856 re: possible regulation of AirBnB rentals through a local tax.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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202290: City Assessor conveying the Green Line Extension Assessment Study completed by RKG Associates.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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202491: Director of Capital Projects responding to #200065 and #202158 re: the city's Inflow and Infiltration policy.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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202553: Conveying the FY2017-FY2026 Capital Projects List and accompanying documents.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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202711: Director of SomerStat submitting a memorandum analyzing an increase in the residential exemption.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202900: Finance Director submitting a mid-year report of the City's budget performance for FY17.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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202962: Traffic and Parking Director responding to items approved 2/14/17.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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203105: Chief Assessor responding to #202902 re: residential exemption verifications.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203293: Presenting Somerville's water and sewer infrastructure needs and the strategies to meet those needs.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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203810: Director of Purchasing responding to #203587 re: the Living Wage Ordinance.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204185: Conveying the GLX Memorandum of Agreement and the Drainage Facilities Interconnection Agreement.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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204582: Director of Parks & Recreation and City Solicitor responding to #204160, #203889, and #203733 re: nonprofit soccer and football organizations' use of Dilboy Field.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204857: That the Administration inform the Ward 3 Aldermen who will bear the financial costs of mitigating the recent flooding and related damage at 125 Lowell Street.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204864: That the Administration consider a mid-year appropriation for additional traffic coordination or engineering staff to manage the many complex projects underway, communicate with residents and businesses, and carry out any possible immediate traffic calming using real-time data.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204867: That the Chief Assessor and the Director of Communications provide an update on how this year's tax deferral program can be advertised to each eligible home owner, and how the application process can be streamlined.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204881: That the Mayor allocate \$25,000 for the remainder of FY18 for this Board to hire its own legal counsel to provide independent legal analysis and advice on legal matters.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204888: That the Director of Parks and Recreation and the Director of Finance report to this Board how much money was spent per year on girls' programs and boys' programs during FY16, FY17 and FY18 to date.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204894: Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$1441.25 using available funds in the Capital Projects and Planning Professional and Technical Services Account for construction administration services at the former School Administration Building.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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204895: Requesting acceptance of a \$75,000 donation from Tufts University pursuant to its Partnership Agreement with the City.

Mr. Snyder informed the committee that the current agreement expires in June. Alderman Rossetti pointed out that this represents the last payment to the city and she asked when new negotiations will begin.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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204896: Requesting acceptance of a \$45,625 grant with no new match required, from the MA Office of Housing and Economic Development to SPCD's Economic Development Division for an Advanced Manufacturing Training program.

Mr. Galligani discussed advanced manufacturing training and said that it has a direct impact on people's. Alderman Rossetti asked why the BOA has to accept this and not the School Department. Alderman Ballantyne stated that she isn't convinced that some of the project should be managed until there is a Workforce Development Plan.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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204955: Requesting acceptance of a \$400,000 grant that requires a match, from the MA Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs PARC Grant Program to SPCD for renovations to Prospect Hill Park.

Mr. Inacio told the committee that there have been several of these grants and this one requires a funding match. Mr. Snyder said the grant match hasn't been appropriated yet, but it will be matched, possibly using funds from the CPC. Mr. Galligani spoke about the workforce development program.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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Handouts:

- Meals Tax (with 203288)
- Buena Vista Garage Revenue (with 204497)
- Stabilization Fund Balances (with 204625)